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done much but for the introduction. Yet it is but honest to say that the thought is commonplace throughout and foolish at intervals. The diction contains such gems as "exquisitry," "liverous passions," "a ruddy whore mellisonant," "surfeit illumines the shadow of joy," "I could not see aught goal," "harlots nude are chasteless and brazen," "the throstle *glimpses* a vision"; while prepositions are simply shaken out with a pepper-pot over the pages where they go "winning out," "waxing on," "learning out" and "stripping to."

One song has the impertinence to begin: "I arise from dreams of thee." No wonder the journalist attempts to belittle the great poet from whom his poet is to take entire lines.

One stanza is worth quoting entire, as it gives the flavor of the whole book and sums up so completely all Mr. Chesterton's view of life; thought not being offered in the form of a paradox, it lacks the false glamour of originality the journalist usually lends his obvious views:

"Howe'er 'tis,  
Baby, shun no duty's call.  
Fear thy God, love peoples all,  
Then whatever shall befall,  
Thine is bliss."

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Aristophanes was the father of Mr. Trevelyan's brilliant *divertissement*\* and the freakish muse of Browning the mother, but Hermes stood godfather and gave stolen goods for a christening gift. It was not enough that he should furnish the slave, Xanthus, with a speech cut over from Falstaff's and the queen Merope with a scruple of Macbeths, and catch up more than a cry from Marlowe, but he splices a half line or so from Tennyson to a phrase of Shelley's and adds the burden of one of the loveliest Elizabethan lyrics to make weight; elsewhere, too, the author appropriates almost the whole of the superb madrigal which the Christ Church manuscript has preserved for us. This is Saturnalia with a vengeance. But as at the solstitial feast all licenses were lawful, so here all may pass as part of the very excellent fooling. These capers and morris dances of wit, these

\* "Sisyphus: An Operatic Fable." By R. C. Trevelyan. New York, London, Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., 1908.

japes and knaveries would seem alongside the last light opera and Sunday supplement rather stately fooling, but in them the ancient comedy yet lives, and ginger is hot in the mouth, nor yet quickly flavorless. Laughter, ironic yet full-throated, comes back for the second reading and the third, and with laughter keeps company song of a high lyrical quality. The poetry goes excellently well; better, however, in the more tripping passages than in the weightier ones which are measured in part at least by quantity: Quantitative verse in English is a species not yet acclimated; a problem still unsolved, though now and then some one makes a near approximation to it. Sisyphus in places is a real approximation tunable to any ear; in places it might seem a chaotic mumble to such as have never listened to that favorite of the austerer muse, the Doyen of great and scholarly poetry, Robert Bridges, measuring off such verse with mighty-mouthed harmony. Since indubitably Dr. Bridges would back our poet here, criticism must be content to back him too and seal approval. Indeed, we would there were more such poetry, for comedy and song are of the great sisterhood, and the fantastic is often the frolicking of happy genius.

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## FICTION.

Here is a novel,\* a work of amazing poetic genius, which it is fair to say would probably have lain hidden forever in a drawer had it happened to be born in our own land. For full as it is of beauty and poetry, and of the significance of nature and nature's impact upon the soul of men and man's response to nature, of the irony and terror of destiny, of the tragedy of man's hopes and loves, it is written at a pitch of emotion heartily disliked in our own comfortable land. We want no tragedies and this is a sort of Teutonic "Jude the Obscure"; less grotesque and bitter perhaps, more poetic and appealing. A great and truthful picture it is of the Sphinx's torturing game with consciousness, and yet throughout the book there flows the healing stream of natural beauty refreshing and restoring wherever wounds are sorest, hope most broken.

\* "*Der Blumen-Hiob.*" Von Hans Kyser. Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1909.